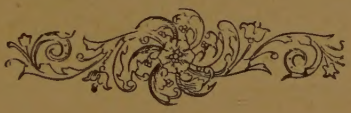
A Great Lady



A GREAT LADY



BY

RUTH REID

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."
—*Tennyson.*

ILLUSTRATED

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TO MY BROTHER,

HARRIS REID COOLEY,

WHO, BY HIS LIFE — AND AS PASTOR OF HIS LITTLE FLOCK —

IS EVER TEACHING THE

LESSONS OF THE GREAT DIVINE TEACHER

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I

"When all our hopes are gone,
Our hands must still keep toiling on
For others' sake;
For strength to bear is found in duty done;
And he is blest, indeed, who learns to make
The joy of others cure his own heartache."

AWAY from the strife and turmoil of the city's crowded thoroughfares, out among sturdy oaks and graceful elms, in close companionship with Mother Nature, stood the old homestead of the Maynards.

The spacious grounds were made beautiful with lilacs, syringas, lilies, and many choice shrubs and flowers.

Wisteria vines shaded the old colonial porch. The tiny shoots, planted many years before, had developed into luxuriant vines, and yearly offered their wealth of countless blossoms.

The low stone wall which extended from the arched gateway across the front of the lawn was covered with trumpet-creeper, climbing roses, clematis, and yellow honey-suckle which clambered over the mossy stones in rich profusion.

Nature — guided by sympathetic hands, and art in its highest sense, that of simplicity — had lavishly bestowed their gifts; and the generous hospitality of Judge Maynard and his cultured wife completed the charm of this ideal home. Yet, within its walls had come an unbidden guest, — a guest who enters alike the abodes of prosperity and adversity, leaving desolation and broken hearts behind.

Upon a morning in early April Mrs. Maynard stood at a window in the little room she called her den, looking out upon a dreary, gray day, growing grayer and more sombre. In the early morning the sun had taken a peep at the world, and seemingly had not been pleased with the prospect; for he had absolutely refused to show his bright face again. The rain had fallen for a short time, and the clouds still threatened a gloomy day.



She drew her favorite rocker before the open fire and began reading (7)

The prospect was particularly dreary to Mrs. Maynard, for in her heart there was a strong undercurrent of unrest; a feeling of dissatisfaction and resentment against herself and her life. Her unhappiness was manifested in every line of her face as she turned from the window and took from her dainty escritoire two books: one, a worn volume of Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables"—of which she was very fond; the other, a copy of "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," which she had finished reading the evening before. Clasping the books with a loving hand she drew her favorite rocker before the open fire and began reading.

Certainly nothing in her surroundings this morning suggested the discontent so plainly written upon her face, for all about her was harmonious.

Harmony had for her a world of meaning.

Her rooms were each carefully planned and arranged as to color, form, and texture, with a view to the external fitness of things, and so were complete in artistic appearance.

"I want my little den in gold and white," she had said to her husband — "because I think it must then seem bright and full of sunshine even on rainy days." And bright, indeed, it was in its shades of golden coloring.

In one corner of the room a most inviting Turkish seat, covered with a golden-hued tapestry-cloth and luxuriously heaped with pillows, offered repose and hospitality.

When the sun shone, the light from an amber-tinted window fell upon the yellow silk curtains and silken cushions and sent a golden glow into every corner of the little room; and the objects covered with reflected light whispered to the shadows: "Look at me! Look at me! I help to make the sunshine!"

From the small brass-mounted onyx table which always held a dainty sewing-basket, to the gold clock upon the escritoire, all was restful, as well as harmonious.

Favorite books and pictures were here. Mrs. Maynard had given them especial attention.

Her books were to her like human beings, filled as they were with human thoughts.

Her pictures she loved. The madonnas with beautiful thoughts of the mother in them appealed to her, and close to them the living, breathing flowers from God's garden, painted with their tender souls looking through them, as they are by the skillful hand of Paul de Longpré.

One picture which claimed the most important place upon the wall was a portrait in water colors of a tiny girl with a delicate round face, loving, questioning brown eyes, and short yellow curls. There was womanly grace in the poise of the pretty head, and the face was full of sunshine. The little fat hand clasped a bunch of violets. This picture was seldom without flowers or vines about it. When her baby died Mrs. Maynard had said: "No; no crape, but flowers. Flowers are *life*, and my child is living in a brighter world."

Underneath this picture, upon the mantel, was an object that always surprised a stranger. It was her little daughter's last

doll, as she had left it, with tangled hair and soiled clothing.

Glancing from the face in the picture to the face of the woman as she sits reading, one instinctively feels the intense sympathy there would have been between them.

There is a bunch of violets at Mrs. Maynard's throat very like those clasped in the hand of the little girl in the picture, and they nestle there caressingly as if they were gently murmuring, "We are happy here! This is our place! This is a part of our mission!" They are always there in the blossoming season, for to her they seem a link that unites her child in the better world to herself in this—these flowers her child had loved.

Suddenly Mrs. Maynard's book is closed and she looks away from all the warmth and cheer about her up at the window—out into the gray mist, and at this moment her life seems as dreary and devoid of sunshine as the outside world, and she speaks aloud from a restless heart: "Oh, I am so tired of the monotonous routine of life!"

Heaven had taken from her, as, Heaven knows why, it often does from us all, the one great fulfillment of a promise that had seemed to make life complete, and left her desolate.

The burden of her life had been lifted with reluctant hands. A desultory attempt at gathering up the fragments had been made, but not with much hopefulness, for at the sight of a baby's shoe or the sound of a child's merry laugh, all her courage melted away.

There had been many days when even her studio had lost its charm. Her books had been neglected. Her beloved teacher, Nature, only wearied her. The trees murmured peaceful lullabys, the flowers offered their hymns of praise many times unheeded.

She thought often that far above her real life was her ideal one, but she had not yet become conscious of two facts: one, that if she failed to harmonize her life with her best thought, no luxury, no arrangement of color or expression of the beautiful about her could make her at peace with herself; the other,

and more important was this: in sorrow, *help* comes through sympathy for other desolate hearts and nothing makes up to us for the loss of human love and human devotion but the giving to others of that which we have missed.

Her expressed weariness of the monotony of life was an echo of the restless cry of many a woman's heart.

Suddenly she looks from the window up at the picture above her, exclaiming: "O my child! If you had lived! If you had only lived! How different life would have been! My wee girlie! How she did love me, and her dear dollies and her violets! How bright this room would have been with my little Christine! But it lacks something. I thought I should be happier when I was planning it all, but I am not, and I have everything that money can give me. But — I want my child! I want my child!"

At last with a sigh she opened her book again, and as she read of those simple Scotch people who were happy with so little, she thought, "How beautiful they were in their

devotion to each other, and such simple lives too. Perhaps the best lives are always simple. Victor Hugo makes Jean Valjean his greatest character, and yet he was a poor, simple peasant, and great only in his heart and kind acts. It must be true as Shakespeare says, 'He is not great who is not greatly good.' Greatness, then, must be goodness. And goodness and kindness must come from hearts that have looked beyond themselves to the needs of others. That certainly made Jean Valjean's life a beautiful one after that one kind act prompted by the sincere heart of the dear old Bishop ——, who bought his soul and gave it back to God. The influence of that one act reflected its holy radiance upon all Jean Valjean's after life. His was a lonely life, and yet he brought much happiness to others. Life does not seem to have ever appeared monotonous to him, and he even risked his life to save a wretched half-mad prisoner, and then added a crowning glory to all his kindness by finding poor Fantine's child and caring for her. His love and sympathy for others must have been his

incentive for labor and thought all those years. It is not strange that all the world should look upon him as a great character, for he never thought of his own sorrows, even at the last.

« Perhaps I have thought too much of myself and my sorrow. Jean Valjean's life has spoken to me of late as it never did before. And the unselfish lives of those Scotch people in the 'Bonnie Brier Bush,' with their simple kindness and tenderness are examples we might well follow. How different they were! They were Christians! They must have possessed the living spirit of Christ. Marget's love for God was so real. It was in her daily life. When she lost her boy she went about trying to be a blessing to those who had lost a mother's love and counsel. Our lives are not like hers. At least mine has not been. What have I done to bless the life of any child? When my baby died I sat down in despair amid the wreck of the sweetest hopes I ever had and in my anguish felt that God had forgotten me but — perhaps — I had forgotten God.»

Self-investigation is very good for us sometimes. It is like standing the proper distance from a picture to catch the central thought.

Mrs. Maynard had drifted away from the keynote that would have turned her life into a harmonious song, the song to her Maker, because this keynote contained the very essence of that One Divine life, the loving sacrifice for others. For a long time she sat quite still, looking into the dying fire until it gave its last flickering light and went out.

Would her old thoughtless life die, and a new life be kindled, lighted by the touch of the Master's hand?

At last she arose, laid aside her books, rang the bell, and ordered her carriage. In an hour she was ready to go out.

"I will go to the children's hospital," she said, "and take some flowers. It is many, many months since I was there. I had forgotten the children."

As she stepped into her carriage two lines of a little poem she had learned when a happy schoolgirl, flashed from out her past:—

«It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone.»



II

« The mark of rank in nature
Is capacity for pain,
And the anguish of the singer
Makes the sweetness of the strain.»

As Mrs. Maynard was passing down one of the long corridors past the rows of little beds, each holding a pale, suffering young face, the nurse called her attention to a little girl whose bed was near them.

« That is a pitiable case. The child has been a terrible sufferer, but is very patient with all her suffering; always thinking of the others and asking to divide her flowers and fruit with those less favored. She is much better now, but I wish you would notice her."

As they approached the bed, Mrs. Maynard saw a sweet, sad face crowned with dark curling hair and a pair of brown eyes not easy to forget.

These beautiful eyes smiled at the nurse, looked up into Mrs. Maynard's face, and then

fastened themselves wistfully upon the violets she wore.

"The nurse tells me you suffer very much," said Mrs. Maynard, as she stepped to the side of the bed.

"Oh, yes. But I am better now."

"You must be very brave."

"I don't know. They are all so kind, and there are so many sick children. It is worse for a child to suffer, I think."

"*You* are hardly more than a child."

"Oh, I am thirteen. I wasn't sick when I was a child. I was well then. Mamma and I lived in the country and I used to have violets to play with, like those you have, only mine were wild, and *so* bright." And a smile lit her face at the remembrance.

Mrs. Maynard removed the pin from her flowers and held them out to the little girl, who reached with both hands and took them eagerly, put them to her face and held them there.

The heart hunger in the child's action touched the woman's soul. For a few mo-



"The nurse tells me you suffer very much"

ments she was silent and then quietly asked, "How long have you been suffering?"

"It seems a long time, but it is only a little more than a year since I came to the hospital, but I am better now and can sit up sometimes and sleep all night. The doctor says I will get well, if I am patient."

"You seem very patient and I am sure you have good care."

"Oh, yes. And the doctor is so good to me. But every one is good here. It is next to having a mamma, I think."

"Is your mamma dead?"

"Yes. My mamma died when I was ten."

"Is your papa living?"

"My papa died when I was a baby."

"Where do you live? Who takes care of you?"

"The woman where mamma and I lived let me stay there. I helped her at night, and days I worked."

"What did you do?"

"At first I minded children at a place, then I went to a factory, but that was so — rough. Before I came here I worked for a lady."

"Was she kind to you?"

"Not — not very." The soft voice hesitated in replying.

"What work did you do?"

"I washed and scrubbed and ——"

"Why! you were never strong enough to do that, I am sure," interrupted Mrs. Maynard.

"But it was better than the factory, until my back hurt so bad and I got sick."

"Had you no friends to help you?"

"No; nobody but the woman where I stayed."

"But had your mamma no relatives who would have cared for you?"

"Nobody but Aunt Lucy, and I never saw her. She lived in Tennessee. Mamma used to write her letters and wanted her to come, but she never came. After mamma died I watched for her a long time."

The smile had faded from the speaker's face and her lips trembled.

"You have been very brave. I did not know a little girl could be so brave. I am very glad you are better. Will you tell me your name?"

"Christine. Christine Strong."

For a moment Mrs. Maynard's gaze was fixed upon the child's face; then she took one white hand between her own (longing to give her a little motherly tenderness, yet not daring to trust herself), stooped and kissed



Mrs. Maynard



Christine

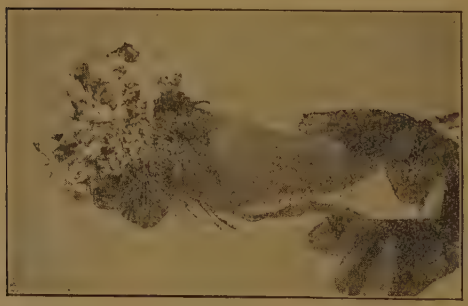
her, saying, "I had a little daughter once. *Her* name was Christine. Good-by."

The child held out the flowers. "You are forgetting your violets," she said.

"Oh, you may keep them. I have them every day."

The little face brightened again, as she exclaimed: "Oh! thank you. Thank you so much! Good-by."

As Mrs. Maynard hurried from the ward, Christine looked long and lovingly at the violets she held and to her own grateful little heart she murmured, "She has them every day! How happy she must be. To think I have a whole bunch, and such a big bunch! I must give some to poor Teddy. What a nice lady — with such a pretty dress; and she kissed me, too!"



III

"'Tis a little thing to give a cup of water."

Two days later Mrs. Maynard stood before the picture of her little Christine.

The cords of sympathy had been constantly drawing her back to the patient face of the little sufferer at the hospital, and her restlessness had rather increased than otherwise.

She arranged the flowers in the vase under the picture, thinking of the delight the springtime would soon be bringing to many childish hearts; but the dreariness of this Christine's life forced its way again into her mind, crept steadily into her heart and left a shadow there.

Half unconsciously she murmured, "That poor little girl! with no home, no mother—alone in the world. The springtime will not

come to her with its beautiful messages. How lonely her life must be! How grateful she was for a single bunch of violets, and I have so many! I wish she were here this morning. I might bring her here for a short time — until we leave for England. That would give her a change for a month, and perhaps break the monotony for me to play nurse to a sick girl. It would mean comfort and amusement she cannot have at the hospital."

She remained in deep thought for some time, then, rearranging the flowers upon the mantel, exclaimed with much determination: "Yes; she shall be brought here. I will do it for the sake of my little Christine. She shall have a month as full of happiness as I am able to make it. I can amuse her by playing for her and reading to her. It will be a simple thing to do and not exactly modern, but as I have the name of being old fashioned and not in the least after the order of the 'new woman,' it will be of no consequence whatever. I wonder if a naturalist were to classify the great army of

women how many would be labeled 'old-fashioned type' and be placed among simple things. Are they sweetest and best after all, or is it only to me they seem so? But — that little girl. Well, I can certainly make her happy, and to make a child happy for a



month will be an experience worth remembering."

Had the room grown suddenly brighter, or was it a gleam of sunshine from a sympathetic heart? Certainly Mrs. Maynard's face

was filled with happiness as she went to the piano and began playing some cradle songs she loved. Then she struck into that bright bit of harmony — Chopin's Etude, Opus. ten; number five. It had never before sounded so cheering and sparkling. "Chopin must have composed it upon his very happiest day," she thought, for it was like the voices of merry little children, singing and laughing; but as she left the piano she seemed to hear above the merry laughter a sweet patient voice saying, "It is worse for a child to suffer, I think."





It was like the voices of merry little children singing and laughing (31)

IV

« A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad ;
A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich.»

For a number of days after leaving the hospital Mrs. Maynard's little patient did not seem as well as before, and she scarcely left her, caring for the little sufferer as a nurse would have done; always rewarded with a « thank you » and a smile.

She called in the family physician, whom she had known all her life, and he gave the child careful attention.

His was one of those rare natures, strong and earnest, which are always an honor to the profession. Christine answered his questions without a thought of fear, for the kindness in his face made a child or woman instinctively trust him. As he was leaving after his first call he said to Mrs. Maynard,

"You have found a great work. I can heal the body, but you can save the soul."

At first Christine said very little. The comfort and cheer of her surroundings came to her as a light from another world, and very quietly she looked from one object to another. Sometimes it would be a picture that would hold her attention, a bit of Royal Worcester or Delft would attract her, or she would watch intently the scintillating lights of the ever-moving bead portières until she seemed to have absorbed all the brightness and cheer her delicate little frame and hungry heart could hold, and then she would fasten her eyes upon Mrs. Maynard's face as if she could never take them away.

One evening when Mrs. Maynard was giving her some broth, Christine looked up suddenly with the questioning remark:—

"I didn't know before that rich ladies were ever like you. I used to think they were proud. Do other ladies do things for poor children?"

"Oh, yes. Many of them Christine, but some of them forget. I had forgotten. But

let us hope every one remembers sometime that she has something she might give that would bless another life, even though it may be a little thing."

"I haven't anything to give. I wish I had!" Christine exclaimed with much earnestness.

"You are giving me something by your patience and gratitude."

An expression of wonder came into the little face as she answered simply, "I didn't know it. My back doesn't hurt as bad as it used to, and here it is like a fairy story: this room and the pictures and the doll and — and everything! Mamma used to read me fairy stories, but I never thought I should see one. She could tell nice stories, too. We had a picture once, like that one," pointing with her thin white hand to the Sistine Madonna. "There was a story about the baby, in it. I remember, mamma called it the 'Good Shepherd' when he was his mamma's little lamb, and she called me *her* little lamb."

Each day as Mrs. Maynard listened to Christine's childish recollections of her life

with her mother, she felt that an atmosphere of refined taste had been hers during those earliest years and that within the sweet soul the germ of a beautiful nature had been kept from the nourishing sunshine; sleeping in her innocent heart, chilled in its expansion by the adverse winds of poverty.

As Christine finished her broth, Mrs. Maynard detected a look of sadness in her face and saw that her eyes were full of tears. She did not question her, but after a few moments asked if she remembered many things about her mamma.

"Oh, yes," Christine replied; "I was a big girl, you know. I was ten when she died."

Her voice had become a trifle unsteady, and she drew her hand across her eyes.

"If you feel quite comfortable to-morrow, you may then tell me all about your mamma. Don't cry, my little girl. It breaks my heart to see you in tears." She took the little face between her hands and kissed both cheeks, saying, "It is time you were in the dream-land for happy little girls."



(37) "If you feel quite comfortable to-morrow, you may then tell me all about your mamma"

The following day Mrs. Maynard learned the story of Christine's life.

Her papa had died and left her mamma very poor. They had lived in the country and her mamma sewed for their support. When Christine was eight years of age they had come to the city. Much of the time during the last year of her mamma's life she had been too ill to sit up, and had plied her needle propped up in bed. They had sold furniture and various other belongings in order to pay rent, purchase the medicines required, and keep Christine at school. As a last hope her mamma had written to an elder half-sister asking for help — but no answer had ever been received. She told Christine that her sister had been very angry with her for marrying Christine's papa, because he was a poor student ; but she had hoped that time had softened her heart and that she would come to them. As the days passed, each one meant more of a struggle to both, until death had taken the mother and left the child.

The remaining things had then been sold, with the exception of a few books and

pictures of her papa's, which the woman in whose house they had lived had kept for Christine.

The *poor* never turn the *poor* away.

The woman had given the little girl a cot and found employment for her. It had not proved a desirable place. She had been overworked and half-starved, but had kept the knowledge of this bravely to herself. Her life at the factory which employed her had been almost unendurable to her sensitive nature.

Thus she had lived (we have used the wrong word, *existed*) until sickness gave her something better — a bed in a hospital.

It was not a brilliant story; not an uncommon one. The world knows many such, or would, if there were ever a lull in the pursuit for money and position, and society did not make so many demands upon one's time, or sorrow deaden the best in our hearts.

It was the simple story of a brave little girl who had been left in this beautiful world — God's world — to struggle with poverty, told to a cultured woman of leisure upon whose

hands time hung heavily. This woman did not like the sound of it. It failed to harmonize with her world.

She wondered in her heart if there could be many such lives, and yet knew there must be and thought of how much might be done to brighten them.

She had always given generously from a well-filled purse to many charitable institutions; given of her money as many do, but Mrs. Maynard with the multitude had forgotten the significance of that thought —

> "The Holy Supper is kept indeed
> In whatso we share with another's need.
> Not what we give, but what we share, —
> For the gift without the giver is bare;
> Who gives himself with his alms feeds three, —
> Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

Poverty and suffering were speaking to Mrs. Maynard now, from the refined face of a little girl, and it was quite another matter.

Hardly knowing how to express the sympathy she felt (never having known *want*), she kissed the child, saying, "It must have been very hard. Shall I play for you now?

And to-morrow shall we look at some beautiful pictures? There are shelves full of them. Every picture has a story and I will tell you the stories."

Two weeks had passed since Christine's removal from the hospital. The hours had flown in rapid succession into days that seemed always too short.

To Mrs. Maynard it was quite like keeping a calendar for each day's engagements, with the slight difference that at the close of the day she had always learned a beautiful lesson of gentleness, kindness, and trust.

The child had remembered well her mother's teaching. While so happy herself in being surrounded with all the comforts of life and what to the starved nature seemed luxuries, still she did not forget the children at the hospital, and wished many times that Teddy could see her flowers and that all the children could hear the stories about the pictures.

The day promised with the pictures had lengthened into many days and very intently



(43) Very intently Christine listened to every word

Christine listened to every word. One day she was specially interested in some of Giacomellio's pictures of birds, and Mrs. Maynard was reminded of a poem and a simple story of which she had been fond as a little girl.

Christine was eager to hear them, and Mrs. Maynard repeated the poem: —

"I'm only a little sparrow,
A bird of low degree;
My life is of little value,
But the dear Lord careth for me.

"He gave me a coat of feathers;
They are very plain, I know,
With never a touch of crimson,
For they were not made for show.

"But they keep me warm in winter,
And they shield me from the rain,
Were they broidered in gold and purple,
Perhaps it would make me vain.

"I have no barn or storehouse,
I neither sow nor reap;
God gives me a sparrow's fortune
But never a seed to keep.

"If my meal is sometimes scanty,
Close picking makes it sweet;
I've always enough to keep me,
And life is more than meat.

«I know there are many sparrows,
All over the world we are found,
But our Heavenly Father knoweth
When one of us falls to the ground.

«Though small we are never forgotten,
Though weak we are never afraid,
For we know the dear Lord keepeth
The life of the creatures He made

«I fly through the thickest forest,
I light on many a spray,
I have no chart, nor compass,
But I never lose my way.

«I fold my wings at twilight,
Wherever I happen to be;
The Father is always watching,
And no harm comes to me.»

«I believe I know just how that little bird felt,» said Christine. «Wasn't it a thankful little bird? but don't you suppose it was lonesome sometimes when nobody seemed to care? I used to be; but God did care all the time, didn't He?»

«Yes, my dear, yes,» assented Mrs. Maynard.

«Now will you tell me the story?» asked the child.

«The story, Christine, is about a mother sparrow and her four little baby sparrows.»

"Oh, I want to hear it!" she exclaimed.

"Well, I will tell it as I read it when I was about your age," said Mrs. Maynard smiling.

"It happened so long ago that nobody knows when or where, but some one heard all that the mother sparrow and her babies said.

"They lived together in a snug little nest and a merry, happy life they had.

"The baby birds were learning to fly, when, one day, in the absence of the mother, a cruel boy stole the nest and frightened all the birds away before their mother had warned them of all the dangers they would meet in this world.

"She was a very sad mother and hardly sang all the remainder of the summer, and when she tucked her little head under her wing at night she was very lonely; but one day in the autumn the mother bird found all her children out in a wheat field.

"She was very, very happy to think she had found them at last, and, rejoicing, took them all to her home, and told them how

grieved she had been because she had never warned them of the great dangers that awaited them in the world.

"She then asked the eldest where he had spent the summer.

"He had had a fine time in a garden where he found delicious red cherries without ever being disturbed in the enjoyment of them. But his mother told him he must never be too confident.

"Another son had been at court among the stable boys and had barely escaped with his life; and his mother told him they were not good company for him to keep; that he must seek better companionship, for our companions influence us greatly.

"Then she asked her third son where he had lived, and he replied, 'On the highways and streets, and often I found a kernel of corn or barley in the rubbish, and I was never afraid.'

"His mother told him he must ever be watchful and kind, and never quarrel with other birds or drive them away in order to fare better himself.

« Lastly she came to her youngest son.

« ‘You were always the weakest and most foolish of my sons, and had better remain with me, for rough birds with crooked beaks, and long claws that they keep out of sight, are always watching young innocent birds and are ever ready to devour or destroy them. You must stay with me among the beautiful trees and be safe and happy.’

« Then her wee baby bird replied: ‘He who gets his food without injury to others will live long and the rough birds will do him no harm. There is a dear God who is the creator of all the birds and He hears their cry, and not a sparrow or little wren falls to the ground without His notice.’

« ‘Where did you learn that?’ his mother asked; and he answered: —

« ‘When I was driven away from you last summer, I found a home over a high church window and there I heard of the loving Father of the sparrows. They talked of Him and sang of Him and the great organ lifted its voice to Him and I trusted Him.’

"After telling his mother of the many beautiful lessons he had learned, she said, 'You have done well, my dear child! You have chosen the best and safest home of all. Fly back to your church window and be faithful to your duty there.'

"Then her baby bird flew away chirping as he flew: —

"All who trust in God each day,
And kind and gentle are,
And pray from evil to be free,
To them will God a helper be."





V

"Only a thought (a kindly thought),
But the work it wrought
Could never by tongue or pen be taught,
For it ran through a life
Like a thread of gold,
And the life bore fruit a hundredfold."

SOMETIMES at twilight Mrs. Maynard took her guitar and amused the child by singing ballads old and simple, and melodies learned years before: "Within a Mile of Edinboro' Town," "Dem Golden Slippers," "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground," and "Swanee Ribber."

The concerts, if they could be called by so grand a name, always closed with "My Ain Countrie," or "God be with you:"—

"Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,
I wad fain be gangin' noo, unto my Saviour's breast,
For He gathers in His bosom witless, worthless lambs like me
An' carries them Himsel' to His ain countrie."

Christine had learned "God be with you" from her mother, and she joined in the singing with her weak, childish voice:—

"God be with you till we meet again!—
'Neath His wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again."

The twilight hours were, perhaps, those most prized by each, for the "Good-nights" were always said with reluctance. The eagerness for the days to begin was not confined to Christine. Mrs. Maynard had absorbed something of the child's spirit, for each day brought some new delight; she was constantly planning some pleasure for the little girl.

There were days spent with Dickens's children or with the tender childhood melodies of that sweet interpreter of child life—Eugene Field. Evenings when Christine's face had a look of perfect peace as the eyelids grew heavy and finally closed and the gentle heart finished in dreamland some beautiful thought of Longfellow's love for the children or grasped the hand of poor, dear "Patsey."



(54) . "Oh, how *can* I send her out into the world,—alone!"

It was in the afternoon of a perfect spring day that Mrs. Maynard sat watching the sleeping child. Christine had asked to take the doll and had fallen asleep with it in her arms. In Mrs. Maynard's hand was a letter. The judge would return in six days, and he had written her to have all preparations made for their proposed journey.

Only six days more!

She looked down at the letter then back to the little girl and thought of the intense, loving nature that lay beneath that childish face.

"One of Christ's 'Little Ones,'" she said; "oh, how *can* I send her out into the world, — alone!"

It was that evening that Christine asked, "How many days have I been here?"

"Three weeks, dear," replied Mrs. Maynard.

"So long as that! There is only — only a week more!"

"We must try not to think of that. We will have a happy week. Perhaps we can make it the happiest time of all. You are

to have a day in my studio, you know"— Mrs. Maynard forced a cheerful tone.

"Yes. And you said everything up there had a story," exclaimed Christine.

"Truly it has. Even the common brown things gathered from the roadside have a story and a lesson too."

"Can we go to-morrow?" was the eager question.

"I am afraid not, my little girl. You must not be taxed too much. We want that little back to keep on improving, don't we? Would you enjoy hearing some more beautiful stories to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes! I should like that." The child's eyes sparkled with anticipation.

"Very well, then, to-morrow is spoken for, isn't it?"

The next morning found Mrs. Maynard with a pile of books upon the small stand at her side.

"Now, Christine, what shall it be this morning?" she asked.

"I would like to hear some stories about little girls."

"Well — let me think — would you like to hear about a very unselfish little girl who was very poor?"

"Yes. I — I think so. What was her name?"

"Her name was Mary Elizabeth."

"Where did she live?"

"In Boston."

"Was she very poor, and — and hungry?"

"Yes, very hungry too."

"I wonder if she was hungrier than I was — sometimes, before I went to the hospital? Who told you about her?"

"A beautiful lady who writes lovely stories. She wanted every one to know how unselfish the little girl was, so she told a little story about her."

"I believe" — and Christine hesitated, "I should like to hear about her, but I would like to hear a glad story too, if there are any more about little girls with dolls, and pretty dresses and — things."

"There are many more of them," Mrs. Maynard replied, "and you shall hear them." As she opened a book to turn to a well-

remembered story with a happy ending, a teardrop fell upon the page.

Many of the tales which had charmed Mrs. Maynard as a girl were reviewed for Christine. When the day arrived upon which she was carried to the studio, it was a radiant face that looked into Mrs. Maynard's, who said: "Now, Christine, ask me all the questions you wish about anything you see, and I will tell you all I can about it."

"Oh, thank you!" she exclaimed; "I do like it. There are so many things and so many pictures. It will take a long time to tell about everything here, won't it?"

"Yes, indeed. But it is such a pleasure to have you like it. Now, what do you think we will do at five o'clock?"

"I don't know," looking expectantly at her questioner.

"We will have our dinner together up here and you shall have anything you would like."

Christine seemed scarcely able to express her delight. After thinking for a few moments she said, "Shall we have chocolate and cake, or rice and toast and milk?"

"Why, bless your dear little heart! Of course we will have cake. Little girls always like cake, but do you like the rice and toast so much?"

"Yes. Everything is so good, but you said that was best for me at night, and — the dishes are so pretty."

Mrs. Maynard laughed as merrily as a child, as she patted Christine's hand. "So it is best for you to have the food which nourishes you most, but not many little girls would have thought of that. I believe I had better order the menu for to-night, and it shall be fit for a little princess, and we will play you are a princess."

"That will be just like a fairy story."

"So it will, but we must have something for our dinner more substantial than food for fairies. I think — first, bouillon; a creamed fish with lettuce salad, an omelet and sweetbreads, with nice bread and good sweet butter. And for dessert (a princess must have a dessert), we will have —" Mrs. Maynard paused laughingly — "chocolate, whipped cream with little sponge cakes, an orange sherbet,

and salted almonds; and you may ask Janette to make the cakes herself. Will that do?"

Christine paused a moment, looking wistfully into Mrs. Maynard's face, and with her voice slightly trembling, replied:—

"I never had things so nice as that!"

"Then we will be happy, won't we?"

"Oh, yes!" (with such a smile), "and will we have the little cups with violets on?"

"Certainly. You shall have all the violet dishes Janette can find. It shall be your party, and we will call it a violet tea."

"And will you wear that pretty dress with violets on?"

"I will wear my very prettiest violet gown, and Janette shall dress you in a lounging robe of the same color. It won't exactly fit a little girl, but we won't mind that, will we? It won't be like a real party you know, just you and I; but we will like it, won't we?"

Christine clapped her hands in delight, then suddenly, as if her old life had forced its shadow of want and sorrow upon her, said: "I didn't think I should ever have a party."

"I think, Christine, it will be nicer than any party *I* ever had."

The child did not reply, but for some time she looked steadily into the fire as if, in the glowing coals, she might see revealed the mystery that had so suddenly changed her life. When she spoke again it was to ask Mrs. Maynard if she would paint some pansies.

"Oh, yes. I promised, you know, that you should watch them grow, and I couldn't break a promise to a little girl. And the day would hardly be complete without the pansies. They are for happy thoughts, you know. I shall try to make them look as though they wanted to laugh. You shall act as critic and tell me if I get them too bright — I am afraid I shall."

So the day in the studio began. Every object appealed to the tender nature of the child, which Mrs. Maynard felt was underlying all. It required only the touch of a sympathetic spirit to awaken it.

Beautiful things from the fields, the woods, the roadside, the ponds, and the seashore had been gathered and treasured here because the

love of nature was so strong a part of Mrs. Maynard's life.

Nothing escaped the wistful eyes of the little girl and she asked about many things; first about the sea shells that adorned the mantel. Mrs. Maynard selected the finest ones, calling Christine's attention to their beauty, their delicate coloring, and ceaseless singing. After looking at them some time she asked, "Do they always sing?"

"Yes, they always sing, and their songs are echoes of the melodies of their ocean home."

"I never saw a sea, only just a lake. What does the sea sing about?"

"About many, many things, Christine. Sometimes it sings a merry, laughing, fantastic song. Sometimes a mournful chant full of longing and unrest. Often, in the moonlight, it is like a lullaby to a tired child. And there are days when the song is a wild blustering one, drowning every other voice, when the breakers dash and tumble as though each was burdened with a broken heart and was pleading with the dumb, barren shore for

peace. Another day it is kind, placid, and smiling, while the dancing little whitecaps whisper of the beauties that lie hidden deep, deep under the water. In the early morning it is often very calm and peaceful with the sunshine resting upon it like an endless unbroken sheet of light, and then its song is only a murmur of content. Perhaps, Christine, it is most beautiful at the sunset hour and sings the sweetest song of all after the day is done and the sun appearing to be a great carmine ball kisses the sea 'Good-night' and drops into the water. He sends his 'Good-night' to us across the sea by a path of gold that shimmers and ripples, glistens and gradually widens until it reaches the opposite shore. It seems almost within one's power to step out upon this path, follow it, and listen for the whispered words the sea is ever singing then — 'Eternity, e-ter-ni-ty'; away — beyond — this golden path leads to the land: —

«Where the child shall find its mother
And the mother finds her child.»

For some time Christine was silent, carefully examining the shells in her gentle manner. Presently she asked, "Do you think I will ever see it all?"

"Oh, I am sure I hope so," Mrs. Maynard replied: "but we can all see the shells and corals and the little brown starfish, and they are the little children of the sea and are very beautiful."

"Thank you so much for telling me about them. Didn't those brown things come from the real country?" pointing to some teasels and cat-tails.

"Yes, from the real country. See how delicately the light and shade of the brown is blended and notice these milkweed pods,—how the fluffy, downy, clinging little things fit into their little bed.

"These are swamp grasses with nodding little brown heads. They grew among the willows and flags that border the winding river at the foot of the old meadow where Bess and Brindle were when you watched for their coming the other night.

"These gray-green swaying reeds live near the ponds, and when the wind blows very hard, if you listen and are very quiet, you can hear each little reed singing a low little song."

"Who do they sing for?" Christine asked.

"Oh, they sing to the crickets and katydids, and the katydids answer in a very prosy, solemn voice, but the crickets sing a jolly little good-luck song."

"When you tell about it they almost seem like people talking, don't they?"

"They are alive, you know, dear, and God must have given them a language of their very own. Now, Christine, look at this perfect little bird's nest. A bird's tiny home is a wonderful thing."

"Oh, let me hold it a little while!"

"Certainly. Birds are such ingenious little builders and such careful, devoted little mothers too. The birds who built this nest cooed and talked over it so happily, and very patiently they toiled, gathering a bit of paper, or thread, or tiny twig, placing just one at a time; selecting and rejecting with such skill.

With all their planning and labor, through storm as well as sunshine, they were always happy. When their work was completed, it was a soft warm nest for their baby birds. In the autumn when I claimed it, the little birds were far away and it was only an empty nest."

"Oh, how I should like to have seen them," Christine exclaimed with a sigh.

"Well, when you take your nap, I will make a little sketch of them to show you how they looked, and you shall keep it always."

"Oh, thank you! But are you sure you can remember just how they looked?" Christine inquired.

"Yes, I think so."

"What did the little birds say when you heard them talk?"

"I think if I caught all of the words, they said: —

"Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
The bird is safest in its nest;

Stay, stay, dear heart, with me and rest;
For love is best. Oh, love is best."

"Is that what all the birds say?"

Mrs. Maynard replied that they each had their own happy little song to sing and a beautiful story to tell, if we listened for it.

"Will you tell me about the birds that built that nest?" Christine asked, referring to a forsaken home of the orioles.

"With all my heart! You shall hear all about it.

"Last spring I was very ill, but as soon as I was able to be taken from my room to the library, my chair was placed so I could look out upon the dear old gnarled apple trees and the great elm that stands as a sentinel guarding all the other trees upon the lawn. Many of the birds had been here for some time. The robins were constantly chirping in their cheery way. Do you know, Christine, what the robins say?"

"I don't think they ever talked to me."

"Didn't they? Well, they will some time. I feel sure of it. They say, 'Cheer up, cheer up. Don't *fret*, don't *fret*.' They had wakened me many mornings with their 'Cheer up,' and at twilight again repeated their hopeful little song.

"The gay-voiced bluebirds had also arrived. They were beautiful with their bit of bright color. A little girl once said of a bluebird that when God got him most made, He cut out a bit of sky to make his jacket. I am always reminded of that pretty thought when the bluebirds come. One has not long to wait after they arrive before the apple trees begin to bud and soon the air is laden with the perfume of the blossoms. One day when the old tree was a mass of pink and white bloom, I said to Janette: 'I think Janette, the orioles will be here by to-morrow,' and sure enough in the morning who should sit upon the very topmost bough but Mr. Oriole in his gay plumage, golden breast, and throat of yellow, nodding his little black head and blinking his little bright eyes. He soon added his mellow, musical notes to the wondrous symphony of the springtime, and carroled a song that seemed to perfect the day. The very apple blossoms seemed to lift their heads to listen, and the graceful, drooping, swaying branches of the elms to murmur a low accompaniment to the burst of

melody from this golden-hued songster. There bubbled from his little throat just two words: 'Sweet *heart*, sweet *heart*'.' For several days he sang that little solo, then he changed to more persistent tones, 'Come hérè, sweét; come hérè, sweét.' It was only a few days before his little mate arrived. Then he sang a richer melody, flying from the apple trees to the elm, then back again, and saying the sweetest of things. But away she flew one afternoon and left him alone and he again began his calling. He had other songs in reserve and when she did not appear upon the second morning, what do you think he said? Louder than ever he sang, 'Sweet', come *hé-rè;* come *quick.* Sweet, come *hé-rè;* come *quick.*' He repeated it many times, still she did not come. I, too, watched for her all day. The next day was perfect. The world was filled with melody. Mr. Oriole brushed his feathers well and in his most fascinating manner began a new solo. You would have thought the melody from an orchestra in heaven had been translated into that tiny throat. It was tender, it was caress-

ing, it was enchanting. He poured his very soul into his song and called: 'Come *back*, sweet *heart*. Come *back*, sweet *heart*.' The little lady bird could not resist that, and oh, how proud he was to think he had won her. His song then was one of triumph, but suddenly changed to a hymn of praise, for his hope was fulfilled. Such lovemaking and planning followed, and very confidentially they discussed the little home they would build. Once they flew very near the windows, but suddenly discovered I was watching them and immediately sought more sheltered quarters; but I had caught the sweet meaning of the low cooing as the brilliantly colored fellow admired the more modest plumage of his little wife. At last they decided to build upon a branch of the elm. I knew it because Mr. Oriole went again and again to that limb and sang: 'Sweét, build hé-rè, build hé-rè.'

"Then the work began. Singing, working, working, singing. They were so happy to have a tiny home-nest of their very own. Day after day, early and late; even when it was raining, they wove the little hanging

basket until at last one morning they viewed it with apparent satisfaction and pronounced it complete. Then Mrs. Oriole took her place upon the nest and Mr. Oriole often flew to her with a choice morsel for a luncheon and I think he said, 'Do taste of this, dear. It is a fine fat worm, the very best I have found to-day; I am sure you must be hungry.' Sometimes he took his position not far away from her and there he carroled his little opera which seemed complete each day and yet was ever varied, but always with the same undertone of love that was ever in his heart. It was not long before there were tiny baby birds in the nest and there was great joy. The dear little domestic Mamma Oriole gave them such loving care, and they received such devoted attention from Papa Oriole that they grew very fast. It was not many weeks before a voice began to whisper of rainy, dreary days and cold, frosty nights, and Mr. Oriole knew that great voice of Mother Nature was finer to guide than any other voice, for it was the voice of God. It whispered to him of the sunny South, where

the days would ever be warm and bright and the air never chilled by the snow and frost. He listened to the kind voice, Christine, and soon made preparations to depart with his little family. And so, my dear, the tiny home was left for rent and as no one seemed to regard it as a prize, I placed it among my treasures and there it has hung ever since."

Christine drew a long sigh as she said, "Is that all? I wish there were more. Will you tell me about it again sometime before I—I go?"

Mrs. Maynard replied that she would gladly do so and called Christine's attention to the different methods the little builders employed in preparing their homes.

After observing them carefully and returning them to Mrs. Maynard, Christine's attention was directed to the faded brown face of a giant sunflower that, from the base of its stalk to its drooping head, reached from the floor nearly to the ceiling.

"What does that say?" she asked.

"That was a sunflower, Christine. He was a tall straight fellow with such a bright yellow face. Now he is brown and dry, but

whenever I look at him I am reminded of the bright summer days. We brought him in from the garden in the autumn. He had blossomed so gloriously I could not leave him alone in his old age. All the summer and until the late autumn, morning-glories twined about him and every morning he wakened them by calling, 'Waken, little flowers! The day is dawning, the birds are singing hymns of praise, and peace rests upon this beautiful world. Soon the golden sun will touch my yellow crown and make it brighter. You must waken now! You have rested so long.'

"Now the morning-glories loved the sunflower, and one by one the little pink, white, and blue blossoms, looking like so many gems, opened their eyes and kissed him. If the sun chanced to hide his face behind a cloud,—making the world appear dreary and dark,—they clung the closer, twining about him and never closing their sweet eyes until the day was far advanced."

"Oh, I like to hear about it," Christine exclaimed: "Can you tell me, now, about that—with the writing on?"

"That is a piece of birch bark, Christine. It came from a fine old tree that stood upon a grand old mountain. Every year under the genial bright sky and pure fresh atmosphere of Keene Valley, it grew one silken layer until, after many years, it became a thick, strong bark, as you see it.

"That is just the way little girls grow to be beautiful, strong women,—just growing in kindness and goodness a little every day of each year. Do you know, Christine, why I wrote, 'The voice of the great Creator' upon it?"

The child thought a moment, then she replied, "I think I know. Because God made it?"

"Yes. That is just why. Because God made all of these things and His voice is in each one."

"Do you mean that God says something in all the flowers?"

"Yes, my dear, each one has a message or a story."

"Do these flowers have a story?" Christine asked as she leaned over and placed her hand



(75) « Do you know, Christine, why I wrote, 'The voice of the great Creator' upon it? »

caressingly upon a bunch of narcissus and daffodils.

«Oh, yes. These white ones have a charming story. It happened ever and ever so long ago — as the storybooks so often say. In a beautiful garden, called the Garden of Eden, there dwelt a beautiful woman who must have been very happy. There was only one thing in the garden forbidden her, but one day she wanted that so much that I truly believe she forgot (just as little children do, and big children sometimes) and — it is hard to believe it — but she did take it and was then driven from her beautiful home because she disobeyed. She was very, very sorry and wept bitterly when the gates closed upon her, just as you or I might do if we were sorry for something. Her tears fell to the ground and from each one there grew a white narcissus blossom, and then she knew by the flowers that she had been forgiven and might sometime return to the beautiful place as pure as the blossoms, because she was truly so very sorry.»

"That is a sad story. It makes me sorry for the lady. Do these yellow flowers have a story?"

"These daffodils? Ah! They sing a song. We can't say this time 'a long, long time ago,' because it happens every year.

"When winter is over and the cold March winds have left us, warm, sunny days—like this one—come to gladden our hearts, and all nature begins to murmur that spring is coming. The bare brown branches of the trees awaken. The meadows call to the orchards. The streams will stir from the sleep the Ice-King gave them, and be laughing and sparkling as they murmur over the pebbles and stones wakening the tiny snails in their shells. The dogwood will whisper to the wind-flower. The wild pinks chatter to the hepaticas. The purple trillium will hear the message and nod 'Good-morning' to them all. Each year it is ever the same marvelous story of life with its divine mystery which is ever dearer and always teaches the beautiful lesson that—

"'Life is ever Lord of death.'

"It is just at this time of the year, my dear, that these daffodils peep from their snug little brown bed, a tiny bit at a time, to be sure it is safe for them to come. They hear the robins and bluebirds, but they don't feel just sure, until the meadow lark calls across the fields his welcome with a song that is a dream of melody. Then the daffodils sing a little song — to whom, do you think?"

"I don't know." The little face was full of eager wonder.

"To a little purple flower that you love. Now you know."

"Oh, yes! to the violets?"

"Good! You have guessed it. It is a very simple little song. Would you like to hear it?"

"The daffodils call to the violets, dear,
'Waken! for winter is over at last.
Oh, waken, beloved! for spring is here,
The snow and frost of winter are past,
My golden crown is already begun.
Oh, violets, waken and speak to me,
Open your eyes and be kissed by the sun.
Your dear, purple faces I'm hungry to see,
Oh, come to the sunshine, come out of the cold,
Come into the sunshine, my own dear love,
Together we'll blossom in purple and gold,
In praise to our Heavenly Father above.'"

«Oh, don't the violets like it? What do they do?» Christine asked.

«When they hear it,—they like to be loved,—they can't come fast enough. They talk, of course, being little girl flowers, and there are so many of them and they chatter so, they awaken the dandelions. Very soon these fuzzy little yellow heads bob up all about, for they love the violets too. All the yellow flowers do. God made them for each other—the yellow and the purple, and they blossom together every year.»

As the pansies grew under Mrs. Maynard's brush, Christine was intensely interested. A new world was opening to her. The silent world to many people. Presently she spoke.

«How nice it must be to make a picture.»

«Yes, dear, it is a pleasure. It must be the greatest delight to be an artist. I am only a painter. There is a great difference, as you will comprehend, when you are older. But what do you think the greatest art is, Christine?»

«To paint pictures?»

«No, not that.»



(82) Dinner was served in the studio

"To sing like the ladies in the theatre?"

"No, Christine. If I tell you will you try to remember it always — above everything else?"

"I will try. I think I can.

"It is the *art* of being *kind.* Always keep it deep within your warm heart. It will prove of priceless value."

Dinner was served in the studio according to the plans of the morning. Later, as Mrs. Maynard reviewed the events of the day, she thought of the many teas, receptions, and dinners where she had been a guest, but could not remember ever having seen such happiness in any face as was in Christine's when she had said to her: "You may put the sugar in my chocolate, please,— as this is your party and you are the Princess."





VI

"Dear little face, that lies in calm content
Within the gracious hollow God made
In every human shoulder, where He meant
Some tired head for comfort should be laid."

THE judge was coming the next evening. Mrs. Maynard had many duties pressing upon her attention,— Duties and responsibilities that required careful consideration; but she left Christine as little as possible, arranging to be out at the time the child took her afternoon rest, and always leaving the faithful Janette in her place.

No duty was left undone that was hers to do, save to herself. Her wardrobe, perhaps, had been neglected, but two dainty little house gowns of soft cashmere, that would have delighted any little girl, had been sent home the day before and that meant much to Mrs. Maynard. It seemed a matter of little consequence that her own gowns were a trifle *passée*.

In looking over the contents of an old trunk she had found a little crape slip with white sleeves which she had worn when Christine's age. The sight of it brought to her mind the thoughtful attention her mother had given her and the difference between her life then and that of the child below. She thought also of what life might have been without a mother's tender, loving guidance. She did not like to think of that.

The little gown was taken down to show Christine. She was so delighted with it she asked to have it left hanging over a chair, that she might look at it.

Mrs. Maynard told her she should be dressed in it the next day and be carried down to the dining-room and have her luncheon with her. The morrow would be their last day. The month was almost gone.

How fearfully fast the hours fly when there are only a few left. How the hands on the clock travel round and round, each time more swiftly than the last. How each hour as it strikes makes the heart beat faster and faster. They are going — going — gone!

So the next day passed for little Christine and so it passed for Mrs. Maynard.

They had their luncheon together and Christine wore the little gown, and Janette brought a mirror to let her see how well it fitted, appealing to Mrs. Maynard to know if she did not look just like a lady.

The expression in Christine's face for an instant reminded Mrs. Maynard of that first visit at the hospital and she turned away suddenly and walked to the window. It was the same window at which she had stood a month before on that gray morning when life had seemed so monotonous.

"I said I would prove whether there was so much happiness in forgetting oneself and devoting one's life to making happiness for others. A little girl from a hospital has proved to me the truth of the great lesson in the life of Jean Valjean and gentle Marget. If God has sent this child to me, may I prove worthy of the trust."

At luncheon Christine was very quiet and ate very little. Mrs. Maynard did not question her as to her loss of appetite but made



(87) They had their luncheon together, and Christine wore the little gown

a brave attempt to draw her attention to the pictures and bric-a-brac, talking of anything except the one thing uppermost in the mind of each. Never before had she failed to interest her little patient, but to-day she felt herself a decided failure as an entertainer. It was hard for both. Harder for Mrs. Maynard than the child could know.

After luncheon Christine was carried back to the "den" and left in Janette's care, as Mrs. Maynard was obliged to leave her. When the hour arrived for her daily rest she said she would try to go to sleep if she could stop thinking all about — about everything. But her mind was too intently at work for rest.

Over and over again she was saying to herself, "This is my last day. My very last day. To-morrow I must tell her — 'good by.'"

Although she could hardly have expressed it in words (the past three years of her life had been too barren), yet in reality this meant a farewell to a land of sunshine, — a paradise that had suddenly opened wide its doors and

given her of its flowers, its books, its pictures, above all its human love and tenderness to her lonely, childish heart. To-morrow the door would close again and she would go back. Back to the dreary little ward in the hospital. It was too much! The brown eyes were full.

"I must not cry! I must — not — cry!"

But the tears came faster and faster, until her small amount of vitality had spent itself and the world with its heartaches and childish troubles faded from her aching eyes and she fell asleep.

Early that evening Mrs. Maynard asked the Judge to see Christine, and later told him the child's story.

He listened to it kindly and appeared pleased to find her so happy, but only remarked, "She is a very pretty child. I am glad if having her here has amused you."

When Mrs. Maynard returned to the "den" to say "good-night," Christine asked if they could sing "God be with you" once more, and if she might take the doll.

Mrs. Maynard placed the waxen beauty in her arms, then taking her guitar they made an effort to sing together:—

> «God be with you till we meet again!
> When life's perils thick confound you,
> Put his arms unfailing round you;
> God be with you till we meet again!»

Then she kissed Christine and left the room. If there had lingered in her mind a wavering doubt as to the future of the child she left behind her, it vanished with the singing of that song.

The next morning Mrs. Maynard entered her husband's study, went to his chair and touched him gently on his shoulder. Still keeping his paper in his hand and without lifting his eyes to her face, he said: «Well, Marie, is everything in readiness for our journey?»

She did not answer, for her mind was far away from the anticipated pleasure of the journey.

He glanced up at her face. He thought it very kind and in his most secret heart he

was very proud of the fact that she belonged to him. But there was something in her face this morning that arrested his attention. Perhaps it was a look of longing, at least so it seemed to him and he said: —

« What is it dear? » (and he did not often call her dear.)

« Percy, I think—I want—I *must* keep that little girl. You do not object? » appealingly.

« Why — no — but what will you do with her? »

Mrs. Maynard looked down into her husband's strong, manly face and for an instant felt that he could not understand. Then she replied: —

« Love her, Percy; care for her and educate her. Do as we would have done by our Christine, had she lived. She has no home, no mother. I — I have no child. »

« Yes, yes, — if you feel sure she is a nice child. Do it, if it pleases you. Have you plenty of money? »

« Yes. Always much more than I need for myself. You are always generous, Percy. Thank you! Thank you so much! »

She stooped and kissed him on his forehead and left him still holding his paper in his hand. As she closed the door his thought was, "Women are queer! I fancied she was rather anxious to go away, but she does not appear to be. I verily believe she would prefer to remain here and care for that sick girl than to go with me." Then he resumed his reading.

When Mrs. Maynard left her husband she went immediately to her little "den," up to the couch and seated herself by Christine. She took her hand—such a frail clinging hand—and held it fast within her own. The girl's fond, wistful eyes were fixed upon her face, and neither of them spoke for several moments. Then Mrs Maynard asked, "Have you been very happy here, dear?"

"Oh, yes!" with an effort to keep back the tears. "So happy and so—so thankful! How *can* I tell it?"

"Don't try to tell me. Would you like to stay with me always—and be my own little girlie?"

The brown eyes never moved! Such a face as looked into hers she would never forget. Wonder, gratitude, and love — all were expressed.

"Oh, do you mean — to — to *never* leave you?"

For answer Mrs. Maynard took the child in her arms, saying, "Yes. To be my own little girl and never leave me. I think you belong to me, and I belong to you."

How the golden sunshine flooded the room, danced and glinted over the pictures of the Madonnas and rested upon the face of the little girl in the portrait and kissed the violets in her hand!

How the sunshine of a divine love, given to the woman and the child, filled each heart with its holy blessing!

The last preparations for the departure of the Judge and Mrs. Maynard had been made. The orders for Christine's care and comfort had been of first importance with Mrs. May-

nard. She was to be left to the care of Janette and her own physician. Only one thing more remained to be done, — to bid the child "good-by."

"There! there! dearie, I don't love to have tears in these brown eyes. You are to be a happy little girl, get well and strong and go about singing as all happy little girls do. When the doctor feels sure it is safe, Robert will take you to ride out into the 'real' country. Janette will be with you always, and she is so faithful and kind. Still crying? Oh, you must be brave and get well, so you can go to school and learn of the beautiful things in this world. What is it? You are so happy because I love you? Poor little starved heart! — I *understand!* Kiss me now, kiss me again, my own; and when I come home, be the first to welcome me."

Mrs. Maynard had left the room and stood on the other side of the closed door, irresolute, her hand still upon the knob.

« No, I must go,» she said, « it will be only three months, and then I will be coming back — to my child.»

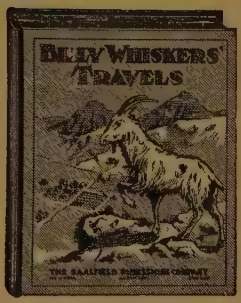


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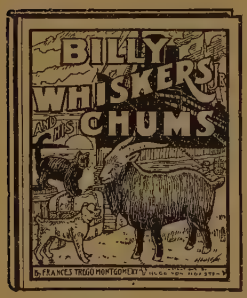
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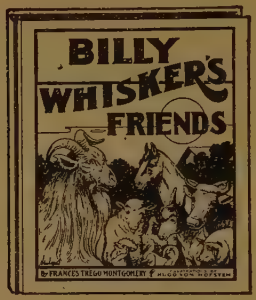
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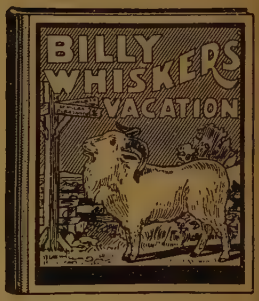
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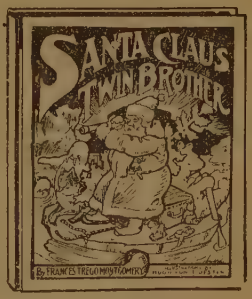
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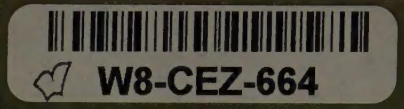
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